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DIA Declassification/Release Instructions on File

12 NOV 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM : Robert W. Gambino
Director of Security

SUBJECT: Unauthorized Disclosures of Classified
Intelligence to the Public Information Media

1. The problem of unauthorized disclosures in the news media continues to be a matter of extreme concern. In recent months the number of disclosures of sensitive intelligence in the press has reached epidemic proportions.

2. Admittedly, the problem is not a new one. Office of Security records indicate that between 1959 and the present there have been 284 separate unauthorized public disclosures of classified intelligence information. Seven of the more recent incidents occurred within the past two months. These are now either under review or actively being investigated by appropriate authority.

3. The chronology of official actions and correspondence directed toward curbing unauthorized disclosures is extensive. It is significant that over a period of years the President has seen fit, on four occasions, to emphasize to members of his cabinet and to heads of agencies the need to assure against "leaks" of sensitive information - President Eisenhower on 23 May 1960, President Johnson on 3 December 1966 and 16 February 1968, and President Nixon on 21 December 1970.

4. There have been repetitive requests from the DCI to National Foreign Intelligence Board members that requirements for dissemination of intelligence materials be reviewed and limited, that clearances for access be held to a minimum, and personnel periodically reindoctrinated on the need for security. Systems of compartmentation have been established and maintained for the protection of various categories of sensitive intelligence information and

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personnel security criteria for access to compartmented intelligence have been standardized. The DCI has also personally contacted the heads of departments and agencies to express concern that personnel may be lax about disclosure of intelligence materials and on numerous occasions his concern has been strongly expressed in inter-agency correspondence. On rare occasions the DCI has also authorized direct approaches to newsmen in an effort to secure their cooperation, but these efforts rarely receive fruitful results.

5. While strengthened controls, personal concern by high officials and improved procedures may temporarily reduce the risk of unauthorized disclosures, it is obvious that they do not go far enough to cure the illness.

6. What those who leak classified information and those who publish it may not fully realize is that in addition to the risks to national security which their actions involve, the disclosures can also result in sizeable monetary costs to the U. S. Government. Such costs are oftentimes difficult to measure, but the fact remains that disclosure of the manner in which certain information is acquired stimulates and enables the target country to take new measures to insure against further U. S. access to data of the type disclosed.

7. Public disclosures of classified intelligence gives the USSR and other foreign powers keen insight into the capabilities and limitations of our intelligence system. It also undermines the attitude toward security at all levels of government. If disclosures of our most guarded secrets and our most sensitive sources and methods of collecting intelligence continue to make their appearance in the news media, the end result is a loss of faith in the system designed to protect such matters. It threatens the very safety and welfare of those who may be providing us intelligence at a substantial personal risk.

8. It is a tragedy to see articles in the news media quoting our intelligence reports verbatim without regard to possible damage to sensitive collection programs. The inevitable result of such disclosures can only mean a sharp curtailment of the effectiveness, if not the disappearance of some of our most important intelligence sources, human as well as technical. Typical recent examples are set forth in attachments.

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9. Although a number of actions have been taken to close the security gap within the intelligence community through the personal representation by Directors of CIA backed by strong expressions of Presidential concern, the United States Government is powerless without appropriate legislation to improve the chances of prosecution to the fullest extent of the law. Further, restrictions imposed on investigation by federal agencies make it virtually impossible to identify the source(s) of such disclosures. The unlawful disclosure of intelligence sources and methods which have been kept secret at great cost to the American taxpayer should be investigated to the full extent of our government's capability.

10. A matter of current frustration is the inability of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to proceed beyond preliminary investigation on cases of apparent compromise of classified information until they are in receipt of a Department of Justice Criminal Division determination as to the prospects of prosecution.

11. The public exposure of our intelligence reporting is destructive to our society and tends to weaken our efforts to defend ourselves against nations which would benefit from our political, economic and military collapse.

[Redacted Signature]

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Robert W. Gambino

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